



# FIRST STEP PLAYGROUP



## 4.4 The role of the key person and settling-in

### Policy Statement

First Step Playgroup believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents/carers and the staff. By providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents and carers have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents and carers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

### Procedures

- We allocate a key person for the child starting at First Step Playgroup.
- The key person/supervisor is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person/supervisor acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents or carer to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
- The manager or deputy manager acts as the back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

## Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents or carers with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents or carers to visit the setting.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person/supervisor welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We offer home visits at which time the manager explains key information and the key person bonds with the child.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting. Treating every child as an individual and adapting to their needs.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with the staff; for example the child goes to the staff for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents/carers leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- During the initial visits the first session, the manager or deputy manager completes an assessment of the child's development with the parent or carer, this is to agree a starting point of development which forms the basis of the child's learning journal document. It is explained that development within the home maybe different to what is seen within the setting.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

First Step Playgroup, Somersham

Held on

24<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Signed on behalf of the management

Name of signatory

Angie Kelly

Role of signatory

Playgroup Manager

Reviewed on

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07 October 2020

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Reviewed

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